













## The Muse.

### THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS.

BY LONGFELLOW.

Somewhat back from the village street  
Stands the old fashioned country seat.  
Across its antique portico  
Tall poplar trees their shadows throw;  
And from its station in the hall  
An ancient time-piece says to all—  
"Forever—never!"

Half way up the stairs it stands,  
And points and beckons with its hands  
From its case of massive oak,  
Like a monk, who under his cloak  
Crosses himself, and sighs, alas,  
With sorrowful voice to all who pass—  
"Forever—never!"

By day its voice is low and light,  
But in the silent dead of night,  
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,  
It echoes along the vacant hall,  
Along the ceiling, along the floor,  
And seems to say at each chamber door—  
"Forever—never!"

In that mansion used to be  
Free hearted Hospitality,  
His great fires up the chimney roared,  
The stranger leaped at his board;  
But like the skeleton at the feast  
The warning time-piece never ceased—  
"Forever—never!"

There groups of merry children played,  
There youths and maidens dancing strayed,  
Oh, precious hours! O, golden prime  
And influence of love and time!  
Even as a miser counts his gold,  
Those hours the ancient time-piece told—  
"Forever—never!"

From that chamber clothed in white,  
The bride came forth on her wedding night,  
There, in that silent room below,  
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;  
As in the hush that followed the prayer  
We heard the old clock on the stair—  
"Forever—never!"

All are scattered now and dead,  
Some are married, some are dead;  
And when I ask with throbs of pain,  
"Ah, when shall they all meet again,  
As in the days long since gone by,  
The ancient time-piece makes reply—  
"Forever—never!"

Never here, forever there,  
Where all parting, pain and care,  
And death, and time shall disappear—  
Forever there, but never here!  
The horologe of eternity  
Speaks this incessantly—  
"Forever—never!"

[Written for the Maine Farmer.]

### THE OLD CAT UPON THE STAIRS.

BY SHORTFELLOW.

Somewhat back from the village street  
Stands the old fashioned country seat.  
Across its antique portico  
Tall poplar trees their shadows throw;  
And scampering gaily through the hall  
A whiskered monster says to all—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

Half way up the stairs she climbs,  
And turning, rests her mottled limbs,  
And from her tongue, with good teeth set,  
Laps out her tongue, with rat-bellied wet,  
And winking her eyes like a jolly lass,  
With sorrowful voice, hails all who pass—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

By day her voice is low and light,  
But in the silent dead of night,  
Distinct, as a passing footstep's fall,  
It echoes along the vacant hall,  
Along the ceiling, along the floor,  
And seems to say, at each chamber door—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,  
She's chased her tail and slept on the hearth,  
Has hunted the squirrels in the wood,  
And in the pantry stolen her food,  
And if on a mouse she put her paw,  
She'd let it repeat these words of awe—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

In that mansion used to be  
Free hearted Hospitality,  
His great fires up the chimney roared,  
The stranger feasted at his board;  
But while the guests their gullies graze'd,  
She thus would serenade the feast—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

There groups of laughing children played,  
There youths and rumpling maidens strayed,  
Fall of their pranks—jump in their prime,  
Careless of toil and careless of time;  
But the maiden wails would wince and scold,  
And pass would cry, as she after them strolled—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,  
The bride came forth on her wedding night,  
And, as she hurried down the stair,  
Ne'er saw the cat was sleeping there,  
She trod on her tail and raised a squall  
And her screeching filled the antique hall—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

All are scattered now, and fled,  
The bride is married and gone to bed,  
And when I ask, how long she's laid,  
If it's 'till time rises again;  
That same old cat, as in days gone by,  
Will ope her jaws and thus reply—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

Always purring on the stair,  
Old "Tabby" lies so plump and fair,  
But Death will scar her from the earth,  
And rats will frolic round the hearth,  
Nor hear from the shades of eternity  
Old mouser's voice incessantly—  
"Per meow—per meow!"

### TO A BIRD IN WINTER.

BY C. D. BEERS.

Lonely bird! what doest thou here?  
The sky is dark and the storm is drear;  
Hast thou no shelter, no downy nest  
Where with thy brood thou canst sweetly rest?  
Hast thou no thought  
That the raging storm with ill is fraught?

Where are thy fellows? or art thou left  
Alone—of thy joyous mates bereft?  
Or have they sought some sunny clime  
To revel amid the fragrant thyme  
That yields its sweet  
To the gentle touch of their tiny feet?

Thou'rt come to stay! thy plumage bright,  
Like a summer auburn, gladdens our sight;  
Ay, welcome to stay through the winter long,  
To cheer us with thy chirp and song;  
Here's shelter for thee,  
Sweet bird! 'till the leaf is on the tree.

## The Story Teller.

### PAT MURPHY'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

PAT ABOARD.

Dr. Gregory had just returned from an early professional call, one biting morning in November. On alighting from his chaise, he caught the eyes of his daughter as she stood at a front window, riveted upon some object in his equipage, with an expression of countenance in which pity and mirth seemed to be struggling for the ascendancy. Turning round to ascertain what thus attracted her attention, the Doctor (he was in haste for his breakfast) now for the first time perceived a little ragged and bare-footed boy, who was hanging at the bits of his horse with an air of resolute determination to hold on, as if he had seized Bucephalus by the head-stall. Dr. Gregory was both humane and a humorist; and was in particularly good spirits just now, having relieved a fellow creature from intense suffering, and received therefor a reasonable fee—two events, which conjoined, constituted a physician's happiness; and the good physician, like Dr. Gregory, would infinitely rather miss the last than the first, it cannot be denied that there are pleasant associate circumstances.

"Hullo! you little centaur reversed!" he cried, "who pays you for holding a horse that wouldn't run if you whipped him?"

"Is it me you mean? It's the less trouble to hold him then, if he won't run," said the boy, "and if your honor should forget to give me sixpence, I'm no poorer than I was before!"

"Ah ha!" said the Doctor, imitating his brogue, "It's a wit you are! Here John," he said to the groom, who had now come round, "turn the horse into the stable, and this little savage into the kitchen, administer some hot coffee with rolls, and half a pound of chops."

"Sure that will not be bad to take," said little Pat, following the groom. "Your honor has the name of the best Doctor in the country."

Dr. Gregory, at his comfortable breakfast with his family, soon forgot that such a being as little Patrick existed. This we say without scandal to his benevolence; for so many calls were made upon him for professional and other aid, that he fell into the habit of prescribing for temporary relief, and thinking no more about the applicants. But his daughter, Helen, who had youth, charity, and leisure, took good care that her father's humane credulity should never be misdirected or imposed upon, so far as she could prevent it; nor did she permit it to slumber, when any object came under her notice which deserved more than casual notice which served for immediate assistance. Mrs. Gregory was pleased with the influence which Helen exerted over her father, and an excellent understanding knit together the inmates of the happy household. The Doctor, though he had two or three young sons, was himself the youngest person in his family. A mind conscious of rectitude, good bodily health, and a most cheerful temper, kept up in his spirits the continual flow of youth. He never permitted himself to be startled out of his equanimity, or made angry by any trifles, and thus, in prosperity never unduly elated, and in adversity never unreasonably cast down, he kept ever on the sunny side of life. To such a man no day was a blank, and no night came without pleasant reflections. The little beggar boy, whose wits had been sharpened by poverty, divined so much of his character from his manner, and from what was seen and heard in the kitchen, that he resolved not to lose his acquaintance. Helen, who was disposed to see how the shivering boy looked after a warm breakfast, returned from the kitchen, reporting:

"Well, father, your little Irish patient says he is ready to go now."

"Irish patient—oh, the little rogue I sent into the kitchen after his breakfast! Well, why don't he go then?"

"Because, he says, you never would forgive him, if he left without paying his respects. Betty says he is 'a dry little stick,' and my own ears have heard that he keeps the kitchen in an uproar of laughter."

"So, well we might as well laugh too. Have him passed up, Helen."

"Now then!" said the Doctor, affecting a stern look, as Pat awkwardly bowed into the room—  
"Now then! young man, what do you wish to see me for?"

"I'm entirely too much like yourself to forget that your honor. Sure you don't give up a fat case till you're regularly discharged!"

"Indeed!" said the Doctor, laughing heartily. "I have a most precious subject in you, at any rate. Pray what have you been doing in all your little life?"

"Oh, sometimes one thing, and sometimes another."

"But what were you doing last?"

"Eating my breakfast, at your expense," answered Pat.

Helen laughed now, and so did her mother, but the Doctor was puzzled, and only muttered "So-o-o," as was his custom when in a quandary. Pat was a more curious specimen of natural history than he had ever seen before, and the Doctor did not know exactly where to place him. His wife, who had been looking with pity at the lad's unprotected feet, brought a pair of one of the children's shoes, and bade Patrick put them on.

"Oh, millia murter!" shouted Pat, throwing up both hands with well-feigned horror. "Sure it's not my mother's son would do the likes of that!"

"What!" cried the Doctor, astonished at what he supposed was the insolent pride of the little beggar boy. "What is it you would not do, pray?"

"There's many things I wouldn't do, your honor," said Patrick, looking roguishly around the circle whose eyes were now curiously fixed upon him. "Beautiful teeth your ladyship has! he said to Helen, who closed her lips with half a pout of impertinence, but lost all command of them in a clear belle-like laugh, as Pat added—  
"Many things I would not do—and one of them is to disgrace the shoes of a son of your honor's by putting my naked feet into them. Sure you never saw the like!"

"Give the young scamp a pair of silk hose!" shouted the Doctor, as soon as his cachinnatory paroxysm permitted.

"Lamb's wool will answer if you please, ladies," said the little adventurer, nothing abashed at the storm of laughter he had raised.

"Where do you live? Have you a father?"

"Mother? Sister? A place? Do you want one?" said the Doctor, hurriedly, rattling one question after another, in order, if possible, to confuse the young hopeful.

"Blind Alley," answered Patrick, putting his hands behind him, and standing erect—"No sir. Yes, your honor. Five of them. I wish I had. Try me once!"

"Are you really in distress, or only shamming?"

"May be I am shammed hungry? Ask Betty if I ate any breakfast—then go ask my mother

and five sisters when they took meat enough off the table to feed six, after they had done!"

"Another hint, Mrs. Gregory," said the Doctor, smiling. "Just load a basket for this young original."

Pat was soon fitted out with shoes, warm socks, and a basket of broken food. "Now," said the Doctor, "Will you be sure and come back to-morrow morning?"

"Will a duck swim, your honor? Will a fly come back to the trifle?"

"Be sure then and bring home the basket," said Mrs. G.

"I'll do that thing, and another one too," said Pat, making them his best bow, as he backed out of the room, wishing them all "top of the morning!"

Pat hardly reached the street, before he sat down on the curb stone, to put on his shoes. "So-o," said the Doctor, watching him from the window—"Helen!"

The daughter came and stood beside him—"Now!" continued the father, "see how little is necessary, how easily a person may be satisfied, and with how little we ought to be content. A toilet table, glass, and bureau for somebody's chamber when she reached her twentieth birthday, a short time since, cost me three cases of whooping cough, two fevers, and a compound fracture—a whole year's practice of extraordinary amount, in my cabinetmaker's family; and yet that little fellow borrows my pavement, and makes it answer in the place of all those superfluities!"

"Asked, most magnanimous, Papa—but who asked you for 'all those superfluities?' Who contrived that his daughter should be packed off on her birthday, directly after breakfast, that, when she came into dinner, the furniture of a princess' chamber might surprise her? You are quite a good preacher I admit, even to finding your own text, as you did in this case. For my part," she continued, blushing scarlet, and turning half aside as the old gentleman looked her keenly, and somewhat quizzically in the face—"for my part, I should be satisfied with a house furnished at no more cost than my single room. I am willing to give up superfluities, if—if—"

"So-o—here we come again. Love in a cottage—the romance of ardent affection—proof against adversity, like a salamander safe—poetry and boiled cabbage—children without clothes, and potatoes with their jackets on. Very fine and pleasant to talk about by moonlight, in mid-summer. Very cool and uncomfortable with the thermometer below zero, and no coal in the grate!"

"I suppose you were rich when you married?"

"Hey! ah, there's John with the horse!" said the old gentleman, hurrying away from a conversation, which he suspected might be about to take a wrong turn. There was a certain young gentleman whose preference for Helen had become too marked to be overlooked; and as the suitor was really an unexceptionable person, his addresses had been tacitly allowed, while the careful father indefinitely postponed, and dexterously evaded listening to any formal communication, inasmuch as that would imply a period to the suspense in which the old Æsculapius was determined to keep the young people.

The most unfortunate position in which a poor suitor for a rich young lady's hand can be placed, is when her father happens to be a successful member of the young man's own profession. The wealthy lawyer, physician, merchant, or tradesman knows so well the difficulties and discouragements of those who are just entering on the pursuits by which he has made his wealth, that he scans their pretensions and characters with a most careful and critical eye. No mere hope is entered by such a father as *cash* in the account; and no "expectations" are credited as actual capital. The young merchant may pass for more than he is worth with any body but the merchant; and the young lawyer or doctor may be rated above his professional value by any body but the veteran in his own line of life.

Such were the disadvantages under which young Dr. Henry aspired to an alliance with the family of old Dr. Gregory. Probably he overestimated his difficulties—and probably, too, the old Doctor intended he should. It is a trick of the experienced to pile all sorts of impediments in the way of the young, in order to test their capacities, prove their quality, and fire their ambition. Many a young man who esteems a certain old father to be a terrible cerberus, would, if he could really discover the thoughts of the ancient gentleman, find him saying in his heart, "Had I three ears" (three pairs, to keep up the canine parallel) "I'd hear thee!"

### CHAPTER II.

#### PAT AT HOME.

The little Irish boy left, on the whole, a good impression on the minds of the Doctor's family, though they were sadly non-plussed by his free and easy demeanor. The Doctor was captivated by his ready wit, the wife and the daughter pitied his evident though uncomplaining destitution. The key to the little living enigma consisted in a word beyond which no city reader will need any explanation. Pat was, or rather had been a "news-boy;" as such he had acquired development for the natural aptitude of his tongue—as such he had learned the readiness of reply and keenness of repartee which astonished the Doctor's household.

As soon as Patrick had completed his street toilet—for with stockings and shoes in his possession he instantly discovered what he had not thought of before, that it was too cold to run bare-footed—he started for home at a good pace. As he knew that his mother and sisters were half famishing, he was delighted to have it in his power to render them substantial aid and comfort. The supply was indeed most opportune. The father of the little family had died but a short time previously, after a long illness, which had eaten up their little earnings, and sent their moveables one by one to the pawn-brokers and the second hand auction stores. Contemptible in value as these poor chattels seemed, every sixpence is a treasure to the suffering poor, and the widow Murphy was looking in vain for some article convertible to cash, though ever so trifling, when Patrick arrived with his basket of provisions. If Dr. Gregory had seen how like famished bears the little flock fell upon the broken food, he would have owned that there was, indeed, no "shamming!"

"Oh, Paddy, dear," said his mother, wiping her eyes that had filled, while her children ate so greedily, "how hard you must have begged to get all this?"

"Sorrow the bit then did I get by begging," answered the boy. "I could then my mother and five sisters were starving with cold and famishing with hunger, and begged for a penny or two to buy them bread, but the people either pushed me aside, and looked 'you lie,' or told me so, and done with it. At last, and here the little fellow stood up proudly, 'I tried another way for it!'"

"You did not *stale*! Paddy!" cried his mother, looking frightened. "And, God save and keep us! The boy has shoes and stockings to his feet,

too! That ever it should come to this!"

"Is it my own mother that asks me that?" said Pat, his eyes glistening with tears of pride and sorrow. "Did she tache me thou *stale* state, by mistake? No, I did not *stale*, mother! I shamed a rich and good natured man out of what he will never miss—and look, how it helps the child! Take hold yourself, mother—I've had my breakfast, and by the same token, the same man is good for to-morrow!"

A rude knock at the door interrupted Pat, and summoned an anxious cloud upon the face of his mother. The immediate and abrupt entrance of the stranger, we were about to say—followed. But alas! he was one of those who are no strangers to the poor!

"Come! Mrs. Murphy!" he said, "if you can't pay your rent, it is high time you gave way, to make room for those who can! Three weeks behind, terms weekly in advance, is a hard loss for us—but, and he gave a scrutinizing look about the bare apartment, 'we shall have to put up with it, and let you go, soon free.'"

"Let us go! Lord save us, where are we to go to?"

"Well, that's not our look out, you know—we can't harbor you rent free any longer, at any rate. What, Pat! comfortable shoes and stockings, hey? You've improved on yesterday. You must be fitted out, I suppose, whether your mother's honest debts are paid or not!"

"Troth, sir," said Pat, a little angrily, "they were not bought, but a free gift, and made by a man who does not begrudge your shoes, not the heart of the man who stands in 'em!"

"Hoity! toity! little Paddy bantam! I meant no harm I am sure," said the man, provoked, but ashamed to betray it. "You might as well have begged money to keep a house over your head, as shoes for your feet, while your hand was in."

"Beggars can't be choosers," said Pat, with provoking calmness. "If they could, we should 'nt be your tenants."

"I'll choose for you then!" said the man, now thoroughly enraged. "Don't let me find you here to-morrow! If I do, the whole troop shall be bundled off to the almshouse, except you, sir, and you shall be sent to the House of Refuge!"

"May be he thinks he carries the keys of all the places in his pocket," said Pat, as he closed the door which the unfeeling fellow had dismissed to close after him.

"Heigho!" sighed the old woman, as she shivered over the ashes, which she was raking about with a bit of lath, in the hope to coax heat out of the tinder-like embers of pine shavings. "Heigho! we are all born, but we are not all buried yet! Them as is at the top now, may find themselves at the bottom before they die!"

"True for you, mother—but never say die, yet. May be there's room for us at the top, too, without pushing any body else down," said little Pat.

"Heaven forgive me, and so there may be Paddy, dear! But one can't help thinking—Well, the sun has risen to-day, but it is set."

"No—nor it won't neither, till it sets on brighter faces, for here he comes, that never come without a welcome, nor left without your blessing," said Patrick, going from the window to the door.

A man of some five and twenty entered—cheerful and humane in countenance, kind, yet not mincing in his manner. "Hey dey, good folks!" he said, "all in the dumps! Who is sick?"

"No one, sir," said Pat.

"No! you all will be, if you don't keep warmer—but that's poor comfort you say, to those who can't. Come, Mr. Murphy, tell us all about it!"

Patrick in a clear and straight forward manner told the new-comer what the reader already knows. When he had done, the stranger said: "One, two, three, four dollars—is it? Well, I would do you good. Your sharp answer will serve for an hour's amusement; but if you are, as I am told, a very bad boy, you are a dangerous plaything; and if you can establish your character, I would do something more than amuse myself with you, for, to tell the truth, you have interested me very much. Now answer me without evasion. What have you ever done to maintain yourself?"

"I sold the papers, sir."

"So. Yes—that explains something. Why don't you sell them now?"

"My father took sick, sir, and was very bad—and one day with another, sir, I spent my little money, and lost my stand, sir, and other boys got my customers, sir, and my heart was gone, and my mother and sisters were starving, and the rent was not paid, sir—and the Lord save you and yours from tasting the bitter cup!"

Helen turned her head to brush away a tear, and Dr. Gregory continued his questions, but in a tone more kind. "But how could a boy suffering all this, be so full of fun and nonsense as you were yesterday, and as you would have been to-day, if everything had gone as you expected?"

"Oh, sir, there's a many ways in the wide world, and then as travels in one don't know the stones in another! Two or three days, sir, I'd shivered barefooted in the cold, and tould the people what I told you just now, sir, and I couldn't get a sixpence! The blessed angel put me on another track, and your kind face, sir, made me try it on you—and that's the whole truth, sir. I'm no blackguard, if I look like one."

"Very well put! Very well told, Patrick—but I've something more to say yet. The house you live in is mine, and your landlord is my tenant—"

"Then, I hope," said Pat, "he's a better tenant than landlord!"

"Well, he tells me that yesterday, you lied him down that you had 'nt a dollar in the world—"

"Lied him down! Sure, it was the blessed truth, sir!"

"But he says he threatened you with the House of Refuge, and that this morning your mother found money to pay the rent in full. Now you must either have had this money, or—I am unwilling to say it—you must have stolen it since, for he says you are very poor."

"Ah, look at him, your honor! Think of this backbiter once! He knows I am poor, he says—and he threatens me with the House of Refuge for not paying my mother's rent, and perhaps he didn't tell you of that, but he told me I might as well have begged money as shoes, and abused me for the very kindness which your lady had for me! And then he says I stole the money, and still he put it in his own pocket, without a tear!"

"Patrick, you have made the case bad for your accuser, but you haven't helped yourself yet. Tell me honestly—where did this money come from?"

"It was loaned to me, sir."

"Loned?" and the doctor smiled his disappointment at what seemed a new evasion.

"Yes, sir," said Pat, proudly, "loaned. May be you think the impudent little blackguard has no friends, but there's a God above, sir, who remembers the widow and the fatherless, and he sent an angel to us when we were all in the sorrow. The man that loaned Pat Murphy five

dollars—four for the rent, and one to buy papers—and here it is," said Pat, as he showed it—"that man knows that Pat Murphy will pay, if he leaves his body to the surgeons to do it with. And it isn't the first good thing he's done, sir. He's come out of his bed in the bitter night, time and again, to soothe the pain of the poor who could not give him fee or reward, and here's put his hand in his pocket, over and over, to pay for the medicine and the food for the dying man, when he knew he couldn't live so much as to thank him—the blessings of heaven fall on him for it! And now my poor father is in heaven, and Dr. Henry will one day meet him there—may it be a long day off, for the good of the poor on earth! Good morning, ladies, and you, sir, too, and next you will play with the poor, don't put the farce before the tragedy, sir, if ye please, sir, for that's not the way at the Bowery!"

Helen was in tears, and her mother in silent amazement, at the little fellow's eloquence. "Here, Pat, stop!" shouted the doctor, as the boy moved away.

"Is it more play you want, sir?" asked the boy, turning half-round.

"Your name is Murphy? And the Doctor's is Henry—eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, here," continued the Doctor, taking up the Medical Examiner, "is your father's case all printed."

"I can read sir," said Pat, proudly. "Don't play with the bones of the dead, if you please, sir!"

"No—no—Patrick," said Dr. Gregory, taking him kindly by the hand, and drawing him to him. "I know Dr. Henry, and there are those in this house who know him better than I." Pat shrewdly looked toward Helen, and she blushed crimson. "We shall inquire about you. What rent do you pay?"

"A dollar a week."

"Fifty-two dollars a year. And how many rooms have you?"

"One, sir."

"And how many tenants are there, in the whole house?"

"Ten, sir, beside the corner grocery."

"So-o-o," hummed the Doctor. "Why the fellow gets more for that one house than he pays me for three! And he wants me to reduce his rent at that! Miserably must the poor be oppressed by such harpies!"

"True for you, sir," said Pat—"if your honor would take the house into your own hands!"

"I can't do that, my boy," said the Doctor, musing—"Pat!" he said, at length, after a pause, "how old are you?"

"Seventeen, come Easter."

"So. Well, I'll ask Dr. Henry about you, and if he gives you half as good character as you do him, I'll give you charge of the house you live in. You shall have it at the same price he pays—on condition that you don't charge the others more than enough to get your own part free, and a fair price for the trouble in collecting. And I'll not renew his lease for any of them, neither. If you show yourself honest and capable, here's an opening for a living for you."

Pat's heels flew involuntarily into the first position of another negro *pas*—but he blushed, hung his head, stood still, and wept his thanks, while even Dr. Gregory's eyes moistened.

"Call here to-morrow!" said the Doctor, willing to relieve his grateful embarrassment.

"Patrick!" said Helen, calling him back, "I want a word with you. Have you a couple of pleasant rooms in your house to let me?"

"Anan!" said the boy, astonished.

"What?" asked Dr. Gregory.

"Why, father!" said Helen, "you certainly have not forgotten your promise made this morning, that when Pat has a house to let, I may be married?"

"Oh, you baggage!" said the Doctor. "Well, when one has a pill to take, the sooner it is off his mind the better. Marry, as soon as your mother can get you ready—for I see you are both of a mind. But don't you go now and tell Dr. Henry what depends on his endorsement of Paddy here!"

"Sure, Dr. Henry would never tell a lie to save a kingdom," said Pat, earnestly.

"Get out of the house, you little rogue," said the Dr. "you've done in two hours what my wife and daughter have been trying in vain to do for two years!"

Is any body so dull as not to guess the end?

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